



DONA International's Data Collection System: Frequently Asked Questions

1. Where are the birth and postpartum forms located?

You can find the birth and postpartum data collection form links in the main menu once you log into the DONA member portal. You'll be asked to answer some questions about yourself in the DONA member portal before being taken to the birth or postpartum form in Qualtrics. After you answer the questions about yourself the first time, those answers will pre-populate and you will only need to confirm that the answers are accurate in the future.

2. Do I need to submit a form for every single client I serve?

We request that every DONA member does submit either the birth or the postpartum data collection form for every client served. While we can't force you to complete these forms, it is absolutely critical for the validity of the data we are collecting that every DONA member participates and submits a form for every client.

In order to accurately answer questions about doulas and their impact on maternal and newborn health outcomes, the data we collect must be representative of the entire population of DONA members and their clients. If only a small subset of DONA members submits the data collection forms—or if members complete forms for some clients and not others—the results will be skewed and potentially unusable.

3. What is the purpose of this?

DONA International believes that access to high quality data and evidence is absolutely critical to decision-making. [Numerous studies](#) have documented the benefits of doula care for birthing families and health care systems – but more research is needed. As the largest doula training, certification, and membership organization in the world, DONA International is uniquely positioned to contribute evidence about the doula workforce, the clients they serve, and the birth and postpartum outcomes that are achieved. We need your help to make this research endeavor a success, thereby strengthening the academic literature on doulas to ultimately catalyze changes in maternal and newborn health policy.

4. What will I get for filling out these forms?

By participating, you will be playing a critical role in ensuring the growth and sustainability of the doula profession, ultimately bringing us closer to achieving our collective vision of a doula for everyone who wants one. Plus, we will be sharing aggregated results from the data collection form with DONA members.



5. Who will have access to my personal data?

DONA International has access to your individual data that you provide in the DONA member portal, and those data are stored in DONA's secure online member database. The information you provide in the birth and postpartum forms is stored in our secure Qualtrics platform but is NOT stored in DONA's member database. Both the member database and Qualtrics follow strict rules to ensure that individuals' data are safe and secure.

If the data are used for research purposes in the future, all data will be deidentified before analysis begins so that none of the responses can be traced back to you. All policies and procedures related to research ethics and compliance will be followed.

At any point should you choose, you have the right to request that your personal data in Qualtrics are destroyed. To learn more about how Qualtrics handles privacy, [click here](#).

To read DONA International's privacy policy, [click here](#).

6. How can I be sure I am not breaking client confidentiality by completing these forms?

You will never be asked to provide a client's name, birthday, contact information, or any other identifiable information. Therefore, the information provided in the data collection forms could never be traced back to the client.

7. Which form do I fill out if I was a client's birth AND postpartum doula?

Complete the birth data collection form. The postpartum questions will appear towards the end of the form. You should only fill-out the postpartum form if you were only the postpartum doula – not the birth doula – for the client.

8. Are these birth and postpartum data collection forms the same as the ones that we used to mail into the office? Why did you switch to an electronic system?

No. When we switched from the physical data collection forms to the electronic data collection forms, we completely revamped both forms so that they are more comprehensive and better suited for future research purposes.

DONA has transitioned to an electronic data collection system called Qualtrics for several reasons:

1. The forms are now only available to DONA members and are completely secure on the Qualtrics platform.



2. We have members from all around the world, and mailing in paper forms can be difficult, and in some cases expensive.
3. Collecting data electronically instead of by mail eliminates the tedious work that the office staff have had to do in the past of compiling and storing these forms. The new system also allows us to analyze the data without having to manually enter the information from the paper forms onto a computer.

9. Will I get to see the results from the data collection forms?

We will be sharing anonymous, aggregated results from the forms with DONA members but will never include names of DONA members associated with the data.

10. Will DONA use the data I submit to judge my effectiveness as a doula?

Absolutely not. DONA will be looking at the data in aggregate, not at the member level. Additionally, the information you provide about your clients will not be stored in the DONA member database.

11. Why do I need to confirm answers to questions about myself every time I login to submit a new data collection form?

In developing this new system, we considered several options for collecting information from our members. The short version of the story is that having our members confirm their personal information before filling out the birth and postpartum forms will provide the highest quality data while taking the shortest amount of time for members.

12. Why does the birth or postpartum data collection form ask me about my race/ethnicity after I already answered questions about myself in the member portal?

There are legal restrictions around what types of data can be stored in the member database. DONA believes that understanding the racial/ethnic background of our members is critical to serving them better, identifying opportunities for growth, and collecting better data; therefore, while we could not ask the race/ethnicity question in our member database, we felt it was important enough to collect in the forms.

13. I still have a question! Whom should I ask?

Please email DONA International's Director of Advocacy at advocacy@dona.org.